

O 101819Z SEP 08  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE 2796  
INFO RUEBKC/ATO ASIA IMMEDIATE 1720  
RUEHFSI/DIR FSINFATC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 1515  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA IMMEDIATE 6957  
RUCPDO/ALL USDOC DISTDIR COLLECTIVE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHMCSUU/CDRAMC FT BELVOIR VA//AMCMI-SS// IMMEDIATE  
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC//XOXXI// IMMEDIATE  
RHMCSUU/HQ AFOSI DOQ ANDREWS AFB MD//IVOA// IMMEDIATE  
RHMCSUU/FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC//ACI-400// IMMEDIATE  
RHMCSUU/COMNAVAIRSYSCOM PATUXENT RIVER MD IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/NRC WASHINGTON DC//INFOSEC// IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2-JIT// IMMEDIATE  
RUCPCIM/CIM NTDB WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHMCSUU/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 096940

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CASC](#) [ASEC](#) [OTRA](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING - AFGHANISTAN

¶1. This Travel Warning provides updated information on the security situation in Afghanistan. The security threat to all American citizens in Afghanistan remains critical. This Travel Warning supersedes the Travel Warning for Afghanistan issued February 6, 2008.

¶2. The Department of State continues to strongly warn U.S. citizens against travel to Afghanistan. No part of Afghanistan should be considered immune from violence, and the potential exists throughout the country for hostile acts, either targeted or random, against American and other Western nationals at any time. Remnants of the former Taliban regime and the terrorist al-Qa'ida network, and other groups hostile to NATO-led military operations remain active. There is an on-going threat to kidnap and assassinate U.S. citizens and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) workers throughout the country. Afghan authorities have a limited ability to maintain order and ensure the security of citizens and visitors. Travel in all areas of Afghanistan is unsafe due to military operations, landmines, banditry, armed rivalry among political and tribal groups, and the possibility of terrorist attacks, including attacks using vehicular or other improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The security environment remains volatile and unpredictable.

¶3. Kabul, in particular has seen a rise in militant attacks, including rocket attacks, vehicle borne IEDs, and suicide bombings. The number of attacks in the south and southwestern areas of the country continues to be high as a result of insurgent and drug-related activity, but no part of the country is immune from attacks. Over 100 attacks were reported in Kabul over the past year, although many additional attacks were thwarted by Afghan and coalition forces. An additional 4,400 attacks occurred nationwide during the same timeframe.

¶4. Incidents have occurred with some frequency on the Kabul-Jalalabad Road (commonly called Jalalabad Road). The road's use is highly restricted for Embassy employees and, if the security situation warrants, sometimes is curtailed completely.

¶5. Foreigners throughout the country continue to be targeted for violent attacks and kidnappings, whether motivated by terrorism or criminal activity. In January, gunmen attacked the Serena Hotel and killed eight people, including an American contractor and a Norwegian

journalist. In April, an assassination attempt against Afghan President Karzai showed the continued desire of the insurgency to destabilize the Afghan government. The July 2008 bombing of the Indian Embassy in downtown Kabul, near many western embassies and Afghan Government institutions, demonstrated the ability of the insurgents to undertake assaults within Kabul itself. Rocket fire and rocket propelled grenade (RPG) attacks have occurred with increasing frequency. In August, three female western non-governmental organization (NGO) employees, along with their male Afghan driver, were gunned down as they traveled south of Kabul. An American NGO worker and her driver were kidnapped in Kandahar in January. Other Americans were kidnapped in Afghanistan in February and August 2008.

¶6. Riots and incidents of civil disturbance can and do occur, often without warning. American citizens should avoid rallies and demonstrations; even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence.

¶7. Carjackings, robberies, and violent crime remain a problem. American citizens involved in property disputes -- a common legal problem -- have reported that their adversaries in the disputes have threatened their lives. Americans who find themselves in such situations cannot assume that either local law enforcement or the U.S. Embassy will be able to assist them.

¶8. From time to time depending on current security conditions, the U.S. Embassy places areas frequented by foreigners off limits to its personnel. Potential target areas include key national or international government establishments, international organizations and other locations with expatriate personnel, and public areas popular with the expatriate community. Private U.S. citizens are strongly urged to heed these restrictions as well and may obtain the latest information by consulting the embassy website below.

¶9. The United States Embassy's ability to provide emergency consular services to U.S. citizens in Afghanistan is limited, particularly for those persons outside the capital. U.S. citizens who choose to visit or remain in Afghanistan despite this Travel Warning are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy through the State Department's travel registration website, (<https://travelregistration.state.gov>) and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Afghanistan. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the U.S. Embassy. Registering makes it easier for the Embassy to contact Americans in case of emergency. The U.S. Embassy is located at Great Masood Road between Radio Afghanistan and the Ministry of Public Health (the road is also known as Bebe Mahro (Airport Road), Kabul. The phone number is +93-70-108-001 or +93-70-108-002; the Consular Section can be reached for after-hours emergencies at +93-70-201-908. The Embassy website is <http://afghanistan.usembassy.gov>.

¶10. Updated information on travel and security in Afghanistan may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. For further information, please consult the Country Specific Information for Afghanistan and the current Worldwide Caution, which are available on the Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet website at <http://travel.state.gov>.

¶11. Minimize considered.  
RICE